TeamKit

Enhancing team effectiveness by focussing on how teams come together & define the journey ahead.

TeamKit provides a practical solution for teams everywhere to work towards improving team culture and experience. It is a self-facilitated team-formation process, which encourages teams to use the right tools, or methods, during team formation. TeamKit enhances effectiveness by focussing on “how“ teams come together and define their journey ahead. Importantly, TeamKit does not require any prior knowledge in team formation.

How does it work?

TeamKit consists of a set of 17 downloadable cards. Each card is categorised as either an action, a ritual or a tool. The front of the card defines “how“ and “why“ each card is used. This gives the teams the necessary context to answer the “why“. The back of the card consists of a short, simple manual that ensures the team uses the card correctly. In addition to the set of cards, the kit includes a checklist. The checklist is something the team should discuss together and agree upon prior to starting any work on the project. It covers additional friction points when it comes to the team’s actual work.

The team can decide themselves how many cards it wants to use. While it is suggested to use all of the cards, the goal is to empower the team to explore what works best for them. There is a set of “recommended“ cards which have the most significant impact on team effectiveness. Therefore, it is recommended that these cards are incorporated in all cases.

If you have questions concerning TeamKit, please visit www.theteamkit.com or send an email to info@theteamkit.com.

The card categories

Action cards

Actions are one-time team activities, which help to build trust, give purpose and assist the team to have a more streamlined formation process.

Ritual cards

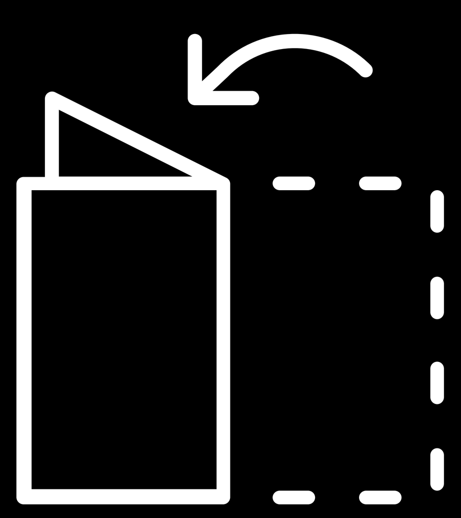
Rituals are reoccurring events, which help the team to stay effective and work well together. The team should plan rituals in its daily, weekly and monthly routines.

Tool cards

Tools help teams to work more effectively. They include different methods, tips and processes, which teams incorporate into their daily “doings”.

Instructions

To save you time, we have designed TeamKit so that it can be put together in the shortest possible time. Download the TeamKit PDF and print it out. Then you can fold the cards in half, and the TeamKit is ready for use.



What you need to know

Effective teams constitute a competitive advantage for any business or organisation. However, building effective teams is not an easy feat. Whether or not one succeeds in creating an optimal teamwork environment depends on many factors, some of which may be out of your control.

Therefore, Teamkit – relying on multiple industry-tested methods and tools – provides the best possible basis for helping you to shape a healthy and sustainable team culture. It is not a magic bullet that guarantees that your team will be successful, rather, it is a process-oriented framework that helps you stack the odds in your favour.

Experience shows that having a commitment from upper management to invest time on team-formation and team-culture increases the likelihood that TeamKit will help you to succeed in your endeavours. Without management support, the journey is much harder. In such circumstances, it might even be recommendable to engage with professional facilitation and human development experts.

What is included?

Action cards

• Roles and skills	recommended
• Goals	recommended
• Team purpose	recommended
• Team values	recommended
• Team rules	recommended
• Red flag	
• Stinky fish	
• Decision process	
• Is – Is not – Does – Does not	
• Personal presentation	

Ritual cards

• Check-In	recommended
• Feedback	recommended
• Check-Out	
• Before you go...	

Tool cards

• IDOARRT	recommended
• Stand-up meeting	
• Parking lot	

Project checklist

Why?

Teams consist of individuals. Understanding whom you are working with and what their role is, is essential. This activity helps the group to talk about the roles and skills within the team and to find a team name. As silly as it sounds, a team name helps to strengthen a team's bond.

Step 1

Each team member should write his/her name and his/her role on a Post-it. If a person has multiple roles, he/she should use separate Post-its for each role. Now the team has to agree on the following:

- What are the different roles that we have in the team?
- What will each persons contribute to the project?
- How are the responsibilities divided?
- What is our team name?

Step 2

Write the team name and all the roles on a physical poster that hangs in the teams' common space. This serves as a constant reminder of the assigned roles.

Why?

Having a common goal is fundamental for any team. Without it, a team does not understand its purpose. This activity helps to define these goals and to align individuals.

Step 1

The team has to agree on common goals. Furthermore, individuals should mention their personal goals for the project. Team members should answer the followig questions:

• What do we want to achieve as a team?
• What is our common goal? Is it feasible, measurable and time-bounded?
• What are my personal goals that I would like to share with the team?

Step 2

Once the team has agreed on its common goals, the team should devise an approach for ensuring that they remain quickly accessible throughout the duration of the project. For example, teams could create a physical poster that hangs in the teams' common space. This serves as a constant reminder of the goals towards which they are working.

Why?

Purpose is an expression of the contribution that the team wishes to make to help the world become a better place. This activity will help the team agree on why they are doing what they are doing. Without purpose, the team will go nowhere.

Step 1
First, step back and look at the bigger picture. Each team member should think about how they can improve conditions for others. The team's purpose should stir emotions. At the same time, keep your purpose real and relevant, because people can only commit to what they understand.

Step 2
As a team, you must answer the four fundamental questions that every member asks, whether or not they ask them aloud.

- Where are we going?
- What are we doing to get there?
- How can I contribute?
- What is in it for me?

Answering the fundamental four creates a bridge that connects today's tasks to the broader team or organisational purpose.

Step 3
Create a physical poster that hangs in the teams' common space. This serves as a constant reminder of the defined team purpose.

Why?

Shared values are a fundamental part of building trust and will encourage the team to bond with each other. With this activity, the team has a chance to draw up their own set of values. These values can be revisited and help to realign the team when necessary.

Step 1

Ask the team what they believe the core values of the team are. The team must agree on their core values.

- What do we stand for?
- What are our guiding principles?
- How are our core values defined?

Examples:
- Trust
- Creativity
- Quality
- Transparency
- Mutual understanding
- Equality
- Respect
- Fun

Step 2

Create a physical poster that hangs in the teams' common space. This serves as a constant reminder of the agreed on the set of values.

Why?

Team rules revolve around how team members will interact, communicate, and work together. Rules express intentions; they help team members agree on how they like to get along. Rule setting gives team members an opportunity to explain what is important to them as well as to learn what is essential to their teammates. Team rules can address any aspect of the team’s functioning, such as safety, expected work hours, email inquiry response times, or meeting attendance. Such ground rules ensure that the team has a set of governing practices that can be used to baseline behaviours and ensure that the team functions well.

Step 1
Create an empty canvas with the following questions:

• What are our ground rules?
• How do we carry out activities?
• How do we interact which each other?

Step 2
Each team member writes down rules that are important to him/her on a Post-it and puts it on the canvas.

Step 3
The team now agrees which rules are relevant and how they will be addressed. Create a physical poster that hangs in the teams' common space. This serves as a constant reminder of the agreed on rules.

Why?

In today's workplace, more people are keeping quiet and are just going with the flow – thinking that this is the best way to advance, get noticed and/or win the political gaming that takes place at work. Speaking-up fuels discussion, ideation and group-think. It's important to discuss issues openly to get input, feedback and invite perspective. Voicing opinions can help to drive more sustainable performance outcomes.

Step 1
On a Post-it each team member writes down how he/she would like to deal with speaking up when things are not going well. This is the personal definition of the "red flags". These Post-its are shared with the rest of the team.

Step 2
The team now agrees on how such issues will be brought up and how the team will react.

Examples:
• Possible future issues will be immediately adressed to the team.
• Raising a "red flag" will never result in retribution.
• If someone raises a "red flag" the team will take action.

Step 3
Talking about "red flags" must become an established part of regular team meetings. This way the team can ask if anyone has a "red flag" on a regular basis.

Why?

The stinky fish is a metaphor for “that thing that you carry around but don’t like to talk about; but the longer you hide it, the stinkier it gets.” A stinky fish can be any fear connected to the topic at hand. Sharing fears and anxieties between team member will help the team to become more comfortable in sharing and identifying possible areas for development and learning.

Step 1
Team members “put their stinky fish on the table.” This is the chance for each team member to share his/her fears and anxieties about working in the new team. Each team member thinks about their stinky fish, writes it down and then shares it with the group.

Step 2
That’s it. The exercise is short and straightforward, but it is powerful. It has the effect of opening up the mood in a team. It creates an atmosphere of humility and openness and an orientation toward learning. The exercise, as simple as it is, works well because it does three things that are essential enablers of effective teamwork. It creates trust and a common ground. Moreover, it breaks down barriers.

Why?

Decision-making is an integral part of working together. The team must agree on the decision-making process. Is it through consensus or is there designated decision-maker? How do we know who the decision-maker is? How will the team communicate its decisions?

ACTION

Step 1
The team should have an open discussion about the decision-making process. It is also important to think about how the team will act if it cannot reach a decision.

Step 2
The team agrees on the decision-making process.

Why?

This activity will help the team to get more alignement. “Is – Is not – Does – Does not“ provides additional boundaries on how the team will or will not operate. Defining this will help the team to make better strategic decisions further down the line.

Step 1
Divide an empty canvas into these four areas:

- The team is...
- The team is not...
- The team does...
- The team does not...

Then write the team name above the quadrants.

Step 2
Ask each team member to write down his/her thoughts on Post-its and to put them in the corresponding area. Once everyone is done, group similar Post-its and decide as a team which ones you want to agree on.

Step 3
Create a physical poster that hangs in the teams' common space. This serves as a constant reminder of what the team does and doesn't do.

Why?

A simple exercise in which each team member prepares a personal presentation of him/herself sharing several important experiences, events, people or stories that contributed to shaping him or her as an individual. The purpose of personal presentations is to support each team member in getting to know each other as individuals and to build trust and openness in a group.

Step 1
Each team member prepares their personal presentation: a short presentation about “three things (experiences, events, people, stories) that have contributed to shaping the person they are today.” The presentation should be visualised using words and symbols on a single flip-chart paper. Give participants about 15-20 minutes to prepare this.

Step 2
Each participant gets 3-5 minutes to present his/her presentation to the whole group.

Step 3
After each presentation, the team can ask a few questions to clarify things or get more context.

Why?

Check-in processes are fundamental for the work the team engages in and for setting its purpose. It is a simple way for a team to open a process. Checking-in invites each member to be present, seen, and heard. Checking-in emphasises presence, focus, and group commitment.

Step 1
When meeting face-to-face, stand in a circle. Choose a check-in question based upon the context of the session.

Examples for check-in questions:
• What is one thing you hope to accomplish during today's meeting?
• What has happened since we last met?
• What is the one thing you will need help with this week?
• *Find more check-in questions here www.tscheck.in.*

Step 2
One-by-one, team members answer the check-in question and then make a step forward. Once every team member has checked-in, the task is complete. Teams should conduct check-ins before every meeting or workshop. If possible, they should also check-in at the beginning of each day.

Why?

Regular and useful feedback is essential for building constructive relationships and thriving teams. Openness creates trust and trust creates more openness. Feedback exercises aim to support groups in building trust and openness and for individuals to gain self-awareness and insight. Feedback exercises should always be conducted with thoughtfulness and a high awareness of group dynamics.

Step 1
Each team member should follow these instructions:

Write down the name of the person you are addressing. Complete the two sentences (below) with that person in mind, then sign it with your name. Team members should reflect on each of the three prompts (*START, STOP, CONTINUE*).

To...: Something I would like you to START doing is... Something I would like you to STOP doing is... Something I would like you to CONTINUE doing is... Signed....

Step 2
Each team member completes the above sentences using one Post-it for each participant in the group. Once all team members in a group are done writing, they verbally deliver the feedback, one-by-one, handing the Post-it note to its addressee afterwards.

Why?

The check-out process is fundamental to the work we engaged in. It sets the context for what we did. It is a simple way for a team to close a process. Checking-out invites each member in a group to be present, seen, and heard. Checking-out emphasises reflection and closure.

RITUAL

Step 1
Stand or sit in a circle. Invite each group member to share something they would like to “check-out” with. This could be a feeling, a reflection, the most important thing they take with them, what stands out the most, etc. Choose a check-out question based on the group and the purpose of the session.

Examples for check-out questions:
• What is today’s biggest take-away for me?
• What will I choose to do differently next time?
• How was this experience for me?

Step 2
One-by-one, team members answer the check-out question and then make a step backwards. Once every person has checked-out, the process is complete. Check-outs should be done after every meeting or workshop. Ideally, check-outs should be conducted at the end of each day.

Why?

Many times when meetings end people still have something to say. Because of that relevant information can get lost or people feel that they could not voice something that is important to them. This ritual fosters better communication within the team.

RITUAL

Step 1
Before ending any meeting with the team, you should take a few minutes to answer this question:

Is there anyone in the room that has still anything to say before leaving this meeting?

Step 2
The team now has the possibility to voice anything they feel could be relevant. As simple as this sounds it can have a significant impact on team communication.

Why?

IDOARRT is a simple tool supporting your team to start productive meetings or group processes. It does this by setting out a clear purpose, structure and goals at the very beginning. IDOARRT allows all participants to understand every aspect of the meeting or process, which creates the security of common ground to start from. The acronym stands for Intention, Desired Outcome, Agenda, Rules, Roles and Responsibilities and Time.

Step 1
Before the meeting/process, prepare a canvas or document outlining all the points of IDOARRT. See below:

Intention – What is the intention, or purpose, of the meeting? In other words, why have it?

Desired Outcome(s) – What specific outcomes should be achieved by the end of the meeting?

Agenda – What activities will the group go through, in what order, to move toward the desired outcome?

Roles – What roles or responsibilities need to be in place for the meeting to run smoothly? Who is facilitating, and who is participating and who is documenting? What do you expect of the participants?

Rules – What guidelines will be in place during the meeting? These could relate to agreed group rules. They could also refer to use of laptops/mobiles, or practical rules related to a space.

Time – What is the expected time for the meeting, including breaks, and at what time will the meeting end?

Step 2
At the beginning of the meeting, present the canvas, going through each IDOARRT point. Invite participants to ask questions or make suggestions for changes. Once the group is happy with the plan, start the meeting.

Why?

A stand-up team meeting is a short, regular, physical meeting where the team briefly announce their achievements, goals, and obstacles. Stand-up meetings help to improve collaboration, capture valuable knowledge, reduce problems and roadblocks and improve the understanding of shared goals.

TOOL

Step 1
Define a fixed reoccurring time when the team is meeting. The stand-up meeting is never optional and should become the most important team meeting.

Step 2
Each team member has to answer these three questions:

• What did I accomplish yesterday/last week?
• What will I do today/this week?
• What roadblocks or obstacles are impeding my progress?

Answering these questions will provide a status update and flag areas that need improvement or attention. Discussing problems or issues is crucial for reaching the end goal.

Note
The answer to “what did I accomplish yesterday/last week“ should only be a summary. Far more time should be spent talking about current tasks and the issues you may face. Always start your meeting at the set time. Those who miss it or who are late will feel guilty and try harder to make it to the next one.

Why?

This is a classic team tool used to keep meetings and workshops focused and on track. During discussions, questions will arise that are important but not entirely relevant at that moment. These questions or issues are “parked” on a canvas, to be addressed and answered at a later stage. This practice helps to ensure that important questions do not get lost and that the group can stay focused on the most relevant topics.

Step 1
At the start of a meeting or workshop write a large “P” at the top of a canvas/flipchart and put it at on a prominent wall. Explain that whenever a point is raised or questions are asked that do not directly relate to the subject or session, the person must write it on a Post-it and stick it onto the canvas/flipchart.

Step 2
Use it throughout the meeting/workshop.

Step 3
As the meeting/workshop comes to a close, ensure that there is time to address the points and questions in the parking lot, with the whole team. If there are any questions left unanswered make sure a team member is assigned the task of following them up.

Project checklist

TeamKit helps to define a healthy team culture. The TeamKit project checklist covers additional friction points when it comes to the team's actual work. Besides the card the checklist is something the team should discuss and agree on before starting any project.

People
• Appoint the project owner.
• Identify a project sponsor.
• Identify other stakeholders.
• Identify suppliers.

Project
• Identify the project's scope and make sure it is clear for everyone.
• Determine wheater defined scope is achievable.
• Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound goals.
• Align on key success factors.
• Identify initial project risks.
• Identify known risks and their potential impact on the project.

Team
• Identify and allocate key resources.
• Consider resource constraints (holidays, other projects etc.).
• Clarify how the team will operate.
• Agree over which channels the team will communicate.
• Agree which tools and software the team will work with.
• Set up the project filing system.
• Agree how progress will be tracked and shared.
• Agree where the team will be based.

Process
• Create a project schedule.
• Produce a list of deliverables.
• Establish a timeline.
• Develop a budget.
• Produce a communications plan.

and then...
• Re-asses the deadline.

Background

Niklaus Gerber is the head of user experience at Vorwerk and former head of digital product development at Neue Zürcher Zeitung with over 10 years of experience in service and digital design. Furthermore, Niklaus is a Hyper Island alumni. His hands-on experience working in various cross-functional and virtual teams sparked the idea of building TeamKit.

TeamKit provides a practical solution for teams everywhere to work towards improving team culture and experience. Compared to other existing solutions, TeamKit is designed specifically for users with no team formation background or team facilitation skills. Being self-facilitated means that users obtain hands-on experience with regards to team formation. This is important since it ensures future teams form quickly, painlessly and without additional cost to the company. Moreover, TeamKit can help them to improve their way of working, defining values and to form stronger connections.

Additional Information

About TeamKit
TeamKit is publicly available over the website www.theteamkit.com.
For additional information, you can send an email to info@theteamkit.com.
TeamKit is created by Niklaus Gerber (www.niklausgerber.com).

TeamKit is inspired by
Team Canvas (www.theteamcanvas.com).
The Hyper Island Toolbox (www.toolbox.hyperisland.com).
The Fun Retrospectives (www.funretrospectives.com).
The Project of How (www.projectofhow.com).

Attribution
Roles and skills, goals, team prupose and team values by Team Canvas.
Stinky fish, personal presentation, check-in, check-out, IDOARRT and parking lot by Hyper Island.
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